DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 183 324 RC 011 871

AUTHOR Lavandera, Beatriz R.
TITLE Lo Quebramos, But Only in Performance.
PUB DATE Apr 78
NOTE 25p.; Paper presented at the National Conference on Chicano and Latino Discourse (Princeton, NJ, April, 1978)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Bilingualism; *Code Switching (Language); Dialects; Discourse Analysis; *English; Language Patterns; Language Styles; Language Usage; Linguistic Competence; *Mexican Americans; Native Speakers; Sentence Structure; *Spanish; Spanish Speaking; *Verbs
IDENTIFIERS Chicanos

ABSTRACT

The Spanish tense system was chosen as a starting point to establish the systematic character of the Spanish used in situations of intense code switching between Spanish and English. The tense system was chosen for two reasons: (1) the distinction among past tenses (in particular, the imperfect indicative vs. the preterite and the past continuous) is especially difficult for a monolingual English speaker to learn, and (2) it is an area of the grammar where practically no variation has been reported among native dialects of Spanish. The language sample analyzed was taken at a Chicano family gathering (four men and five women) where code switching was the predominant language style. Analysis of one speaker's narrative (one of the few speech events conducted entirely in Spanish) showed that the use of Spanish past tenses was systematic and consistent with monolingual dialects of Spanish. However, the tense distribution was skewed towards a higher frequency of the imperfect indicative in an auxiliary than in a main verb alone. This can be explained as a consequence of language contact by the fact that English verbs use auxiliaries much more frequently than Spanish to express tense and aspect. The analysis of the distribution of tenses suggests that the Spanish spoken by United States bilinguals is an independent dialect of Spanish providing areas of structural equivalence where code switching can take place. (JH)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Beatriz R. Lavandera

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

ED183324

Beatriz R. Lavandera
National Conference on
Chicano and Latino Discourse
Princeton, N.J.
April 1978

LO QUEBRAMOS, BUT ONLY IN PERFORMANCE

We all know that "being a bilingual" may mean many different things. The Chicano English-Spanish bilinguals whose speech I am describing do however share a series of beliefs about this knowledge and use of language. They are convinced that there is something wrong with the way they speak, which is to blame for many of their socio-economic limitations. They tend to consider themselves to be either primarily English or primarily Spanish speakers, but they acknowledge that they do "a lot of mixing," the implication being that this mixing is related to an incomplete proficiency in either language.

As I have indicated elsewhere with examples from the Italian-Spanish speaking community in Buenos Aires (Argentina), it may be the case for some bilinguals that because of the specialization of each code to a set of domains, neither code has fully developed stylistic variation within their performance (Lavandera 1978). The stylistic and other non-referential meanings are instead systematically expressed by means of switching. As speakers of at least three varieties (in the Chicano case, Spanish, English, and the mixed variety), their stylistically richest variety would probably be the mixed variety rather than either of the codes separately. These speakers who feel that "switching" languages is the most comfortable and natural way of expressing themselves may only be a subset of the Chicano community. I met many other Chicano bilinguals for whom "switching" plays only a reduced role, and they find all the necessary means of expression within monolingual English. To what extent these speakers who understand both languages but use only one of them in production are still to be considered bilinguals is an open issue which I will

RC 011821

not discuss here. I would rather address once more the issue of what it takes to be a bilingual who feels more at ease when mixing languages and how much knowledge of each of the languages is exploited. In this paper I restrict the analysis to Spanish.

Labov has resisted the suggestion that the competence of those bilinguals who produce fragments of what he calls "strange mixtures" includes rules for alternating between the two languages. He considers the mixture itself "unsystematic," and he is right in saying that its systematicity has not been proven in a definite way. He reserves the notion of system for the codes which are involved in the mixture. We would thus have unsystematic mixture of two systematic codes. Labov finds it methodologically useful to show examples of "unsystematicity" since only the absence of "system" makes the notion of "systematic" justifiable. He says: "It would be meaningless to say that linguistic relations are systematic if there were not also forms of communication which are unsystematic" (1971: 451). Thus, he contrasts the unsystematicity of the mixture with the systematicity of the codes that are mixed.

The work of Gumperz and his co-workers focuses on the meanings of code switching, and therefore on its systematicity. I want to explore the other side of the issue, the extent to which the systematicity of the codes involved in the switching is preserved. I can show the use of Spanish past tenses by one of these bilingual speakers to be systematic and consistent with the distribution of tenses in monolingual dialects of Spanish. On the other hand, some extensions of the distribution of tenses are characteristic of this variety of Spanish and can be understood in terms of its "convergence" with English.

The choice of the Spanish tense system as a starting point to establish the systematic character of the Spanish used in situations of intense code-switching is motivated by the observation that one of the most difficult areas of the Spanish

language for a monolingual English speaker to learn is the distinction among past tenses: imperfect indicative, preterite, past continuous, present perfect, and pluperfect. In particular, the distribution of the imperfect indicative vs. the preterite and the past continuous is not easily cast in a formal rule or short set of rules. The confusion in the use of these tenses, like the distinction between ser and estar ('to be'), is one of the typical grammatical "mistakes" of a native English speaker's Spanish. But while ser and estar sometimes appear used by bilingual speakers in ways divergent from the distribution found among monolingual speakers (see below yo ya era arriba 'I was already at the top'), bilinguals who switch extensively use the tense system to make the same distinctions monolingual Spanish speakers make. Although the Spanish tense forms are sometimes combined with those of the English tense system, even in the same clause, the Spanish tense forms are not known fragmentarily but as members of the whole linguistic system of past tenses.

We are now approaching an issue which is far from having been investigated clearly. What does a bilingual speaker of Spanish and English know when s/he professes to know 'some' Spanish? What are the characteristics of the at times incomplete native knowledge of a language by a native bilingual that nevertheless makes it different from the incomplete knowledge of that same language by a non-native bilingual?

Some of the speakers who produced the corpus I am analyzing here can be said to know less Spanish than some monolingual English speakers who have studied Spanish systematically for several years. They are aware of this and comment on it. However, they do show total mastery of some of the core subsystems of the language in a native way. Which are these subsystems? How are they preserved? When are they acquired? Can the selection of some systems for preservation be explained on any functional basis? For instance, are the systems for which there

is no equivalence in the other language better preserved? Or is their preservation related instead to the kinds of meanings these systems are apt to convey? Or are those systems employed more frequently in situations which favor the use of Spanish exercised more thoroughly and therefore better preserved?

An example of this last kind of correlation might be the following. The bilingual speakers analyzed here generally prefer to use Spanish to tell childhood stories, to talk about things which happened many years ago, or to describe living conditions in the old days. Since this type of narration in Spanish implies a thorough mastery of the opposition imperfect indicative / preterite, these speakers are very competent in the use of this Spanish tense opposition. It is impossible to talk about the past in Spanish without knowing this tense distinction, and switching to English in these reminiscent or evocative passages would probably fail to convey the desired meaning. We would have here one more instance of the relationship between the development of competence in a code or part of a code and the opportunities to exercise it. I have suggested elsewhere (1978) that if a code is not applied in a wide enough range of very different situations, the competence involving the ability to vary so as to indicate different registers may remain underdeveloped even if potentially the speaker were to have the means to make such distinctions. Likewise, if one code is especially used to talk about the past and talking about plans and the future is relegated to another code, we can predict that in the first code the past system will be better preserved than the non-past system.

The data I will now discuss represents a family gathering which lasted four and a half hours and which I recorded semi-surreptitiously in February 1977. The hosts agreed to the use of a recorder, which was not hidden, but the guests were only told explicitly that we had taped everything at the end of the gathering, at which time they gave their permission for me to keep the tapes.

The speech analyzed was produced by four Chicano men, four Chicano women, and myself. My contribution to the talk was minimal, and consisted in answering questions about how long I had been in the country, about my job, etc. There were also some children in the house who occasionally made short entrances. They were encouraged to introduce themselves to me in Spanish, but they refused, and I hastened to introduce myself in English to them. These young people spoke English in my presence and were addressed in English by their parents. The adults, who ranged in age from 40 to 50, had all been migrant farm workers and now held better jobs, varied in their preference for one or another of the languages when speaking among themselves, but they all resorted to switching so often that this can be considered a situation conducted primarily in code switching. I chose to analyze one of the very few speech events which involved only Spanish.

It is interesting to note that as a rule recollections of the past were verbalized mainly in Spanish with switching into English, while descriptions of their present jobs or of people they meet at work were conducted in English, always with switching. At one point one of the women is describing a fellow-worker in English, but she switches to Spanish to comment on what she knows about this person's childhood. This preference for using Spanish to talk about the past resulted in a high frequency of Spanish forms of the verbal past tense system.

Before turning to the examination of the text, it is important to point out that however subtle the distinction between imperfect indicative and preterite may appear to a foreigner, it is one area of the grammar where practically no variation has been reported among the different native dialects of Spanish. The use of the imperfect indicative for a preterite or vice versa is perceived as a foreign use and there is no geographic or social variation. On the other hand, the imperfect indicative appears in socially and stylistically conditioned variation with non-past forms such as the conditional, the present indicative, etc.

I will present an analysis of past forms used to refer to the past[1] in one of the narratives in this corpus. It was told by Pepe, a Texan, who was reported to prefer Spanish and who did use more Spanish than the others at this gathering. What his narrative shows is that the use of tenses to organize discourse is consistent with the meanings and distribution of these forms for monolingual Spanish speakers and furthermore, that it is a skilful use of tenses which makes a narrative out of what in fact has very few elements which in terms of contents would be assigned to a narrative. It is told as a narrative and it sounds like a narrative, even though, as we will see, very little is really being told.

This is the story Pepe tells:

Fíjate, Tom, hablando de ese Alamo te vua platicar una historia [T. ... storias] Okay? Ese Alamo ahí hicieron el el ser ahí en en un lado del del río en un pueblito que se llama Bracketville este y luego estaban estaban eh fueron ahí andaban los de esos ah carrotes y y y y este y luego las station wagons y cuanto, con la Columbia o Paramount Pictures en las puertas [T. Si] y luego este andaban queriendo agarrar gente, especialmente muchos mejicanos porque los mejicanos los mejicanos iban a hacer los soldados mejicanos, ves? [T. Hm, hm] que iban a estar peleando contra los tejanos [T. Si] en el Alamo [T. Si] y luego después de casados a los cinco años que fuimos pa llá me encontré a este muchacho que era muy amigo mío y era grandote y prietote y luego tenía unas narizotas como indio ... puro chicano ... este y luego ya comenzamos a hablar de esto y lotro y luego ya me comenzó a platicar de la vista del Alamo y dice "No pos si ya, sta trabajé en películas yo también" Digo "Ah, frega" [ALL. laughter] y luego me platicó de un incidente que iban los soldados mejicanos iban ya a entrar al Alamo y luego ponían escaleras [T. Escaleras] Ahá! Y luego subían pa arriba [T. Pa arriba] y luego les habían hecho pozos y luego habían puesto colchones y luego arriba de los colchones sus cartones, y luego le le tiraban [T. Poca tierra] tierra pa que se miraran como que estaban quedando en el suelo. [T. Aha!] Dice "Pues yo y era arriba y luego me pusharon la escalera y ya no alcancé a caer en el en el colchón." [B. En el colchón. ALL. laughter and comments] En el Alamo. [D. Quería ser estrella y se estrelló.][2]

The analysis I present below has three parts:

1) A broad examination of the structure of this narrative in Labov's terms (1972) which allows us to conclude that there does not seem to be anything specific to this particular one which makes it different from the structure of narratives that have been analyzed for English and Spanish.

2) An attempt to establish how the use of tenses contribute to the structuring of the narrative.

3) From the use of Spanish past tenses to structure a narrative, some generalizations are made as to the distribution of past tense forms in this variety of United States Spanish.

NARRATIVE (with each clause on a new, numbered line)

ABSTRACT

1. Fíjate, Tom
2. hablando de ese Alamo
3. te vua platicar una historia

FIRST ORIENTATION

4. Ese Alamo,[a] ahí hicieron ser
5. ahí en un lado del río en un pueblito que se llama Bracketville
6. y luego estaban estaban fueron ahí andaban los de esos carrotes
7. y luego las station wagons y cuanto,
8. con la Columbia o Paramount Pictures en las puertas
9. y luego andaban queriendo agarrar gente
10. especialmente muchos mejicanos
11. porque los mejicanos iban a hacer los soldados mejicanos
12. ves?

13. que iban a estar peleando contra los tejanos

SECOND ORIENTATION

14. y luego después de casados a los cinco años que fuimos pa llá
15. me encontré[b] a este muchacho
16. que era muy amigo mío
17. era grandote y prietote
18. y luego tenía unas narizotas como indio
19. ... puro chicano ...

PSEUDO-ACTION

20. y luego[c] ya comenzamos a hablar de esto y lotro
21. y luego[d] ya me comenzó a platicar de la vista del Alamo
22. y dice
23. "No pos si ya, sta trabajé en películas yo también"
24. digo "Ah, frega!"
25. y luego[e] me platicó de un incidente

THIRD ORIENTATION

26. que iban los soldados mejicanos iban ya a entrar al Alamo
27. y luego ponían escaleras
28. y luego subían pa arriba
29. y luego les habían hecho pozos
30. y luego habían puesto colchones
31. y luego arriba de los colchones sus cartones
32. y luego le tiraban tierra
33. pa que se miraran
34. como que estaban quedardo en el suelo

35. Dice

ACTION

36. "Pues[f] yo ya era arriba
37. y luego[g] me pusharon la escalera
38. y ya[h] no alcancé a caer en el colchón."

CODA

39. En el Alamo.

D. Quería ser estrella y se estrelló.

The first three lines can be interpreted as the "abstract" insofar as they state in precise terms that the reason for telling the story is not to make any particular point but that mentioning El Alamo has reminded Pepe of a story about El Alamo. Pepe gets the floor by calling out to one of the participants, Tom, who, significantly, is across the room which means that if Tom is to hear the story, everybody else must shut up and listen to it as well. The choice of the main interlocutor is furthermore justified by the fact that Tom was the one who had been talking about El Alamo.

Lines 4-13 provide the first orientation of this narrative. Pepe gives a more precise location, en un lado del río en un pueblito que se llama Bracketville 'by the side of the river in a small town called Bracketville' and introduces the time indirectly. No clause expresses the temporal information but the description of the activities leads to the inference that they took place at a time when they were trying to make a movie about the battle at El Alamo.

It is important to point out that the occurrence of the preterite hicieron ser ahí 'made be there' in an utterance which is never completed nevertheless contributes to establishing when all the activities which make up the story actually took place. This constitutes an interesting example of the functionality in real communication of

"ungrammatical" incomplete utterances.

This orientation section also provides information about the participants of this story. The fact that the Americans (represented by la Columbia o Paramount Pictures) and the mejicanos are going to make a movie which involves both mejicanos and tejanos is an "evaluation" of Pepe's narrative as being relevant to the ethnic concerns of his audience. In fact, the point of his story is totally unrelated to the issue of mejicanos and tejanos but Pepe's skill as a narrator becomes evident here since mentioning the different ethnic groups serves to suspend the action and to gain the attention of his listeners.

Lines 14-19 provide a second orientation which itself has the form of an embedded narrative. Thus, in the setting described by the first orientation an event takes place: the meeting of Pepe and his Chicano friend. However, as we will see, this event is only a speech event in which the original narrative, that which contains the punch line, was told.

There are several things to be pointed out here. First, Pepe again uses his strategy of referring to ethnic characteristics to suggest that the point of the story may be relevant to ethnic issues. He insists on describing his friend as grandote y prietote 'big and dark' with narizotas como indio 'a great big nose like an Indian', puro Chicano and he devotes three clauses to this description. As we see at the resolution of the story, the friend's Chicano identity or his Indian traits play no role in the comic incident. Another interesting strategy is the precision with which Pepe dates this encounter: después de casados, a los cinco años que fuimos pa llá 'after getting married, five years after we went there'. This date relates to a very important even in his life, his marriage, and creates the expectation that he will narrate a personal experience, rather than the vicarious experience which it turns out to be. The effect of personal involvement is emphasized by the clause este muchacho que era muy amigo mío 'this guy who was

a very good friend of mine'.

Line 20 points, once more misleadingly, to the initiation of complicating action. No action really gets started except for a friend talking to Pepe about an incident. It is the incident itself which will constitute the complicating action, which contains the point of the story, and which is only three clauses long (36–38), all of them narrative clauses.

But lines 23 and 24 describe a "pseudo–action" and thus serve another function which contributes more directly to the point made at the end: they provide the necessary contrast to make the friend's fall from the ladder more ridiculous and hilarious. An evaluation is contained in the direct quote in these lines which present Pepe's friend as showing off about this participation in the film as well as making Pepe come through as being quite impressed with the news that his friend had been an actor.

Line 26 is the beginning of the story as narrated by the friend who provides an orientation describing the time: the moment in the filming when los soldados mejicanos iban ya a entrar al Alamo 'the Mexican soldiers were about to enter the Alamo', as well as a series of activities carried out before the main event. This orientation covers lines 26 through 34.

Lines 36–38 (three clauses) can be analyzed as the complicating action of the larger story, or as a story in itself, reported here within a larger speech structure by means of a direct quote. The direct quote introduced by dice 'he says' (35) makes the story into the narration of a personal experience, although, as I have already pointed out, when we see the whole turn as a narrative, this direct quote is just a component of the narration of a vicarious experience.

Finally, by way of a coda, Pepe repeats his justification for telling the story: En el Alamo 'in the Alamo' (39). They were talking about El Alamo, well, here is something that happened at El Alamo.

The basic mechanism of the narrative, which as I have already suggested is based on unfulfilled expectations and contrast, is well captured by one of the women in a very good coda: Quería ser estrella y se estrello literally 'he wanted to be a star and he crashed', but there is a pun involved which might translate as 'he wanted to be a smash and he smashed.' This in itself expresses a contrast and refers to the unfulfilled expectations of fame and glory of the protagonist which matches the unfulfilled expectations of the listeners for some serious ethnic relevance in the story.

The factors which lead to isolating this fragment of speech as a single speech event identifiable as a narrative are at least the following:

1) It is explicitly introduced as a narrative: te vua platicar una historia 'I'm gonna tell you a story'.

2) The name of the place at the very beginning, ese Alamo 'that Alamo', which has been mentioned in the conversation, indicates that he is going to report something that took place in ese Alamo. As long as Pepe keeps locating the action in the Alamo, he is interpreted as still being involved in the same story.

3) It is told without interruptions by a single person. That is, Pepe holds the floor throughout this period although he allows his listeners to intersperse brief comments and feedback.

4) The use of luego 'then' conveys the idea of a connected succession of events, although luego can be shown not to have a referentially temporal meaning here. As a matter of fact, if luego were to be read with a referentially temporal meaning, the story would sound incoherent. The temporality of luego is text-oriented, it is there to indicate the connection among the different sentences.

5) Finally, what I will show below is that the cohesion of the narrative derives to a large extent from the appropriate use made of the tenses, specifically of the opposition imperfect indicative / preterite.

Distribution of tenses

ABSTRACT (1-3) te vua platicar una historia
Future

FIRST ORIENTATION
(4-13) ese Alamo ahí hicieron ser
Preterite

(que se llama)
Present

estab-n, estaban, fueron, andaban, andaban queriendo
Imperf. Imperf. Preter. Imperf. Imperf.

agarrar, iban a hacer (que iban a estar peleando)
Imperf. Imperf.

SECOND ORIENTATION
(14-19) que[3] fuimos, encontré, (que era ..., era ... y tenía)
Preter. Preterite Imperf. Imperf. Imperf.

PSEUDO-ACTION
(20-25) dice, trabajé, digo, me platicó
Pres. Preter. Pres. Preter.

THIRD ORIENTATION
(26-34) iban los soldados tejanos, iban ya a entrar
Imperf. Imperf.

ponían, subían, habían hecho, habían puesto, tiraban
Imperf. Imperf. Pluperfect Pluperfect Imperf.

(para que se miraran [como que estaban quedando])
Imperf.Subj. Imperf.

ACTION (36-38)

Orientation (36) era
Imperf.

pusharon, no alcancé a caer
Preterite Preterite

The table below is a quantitative display of the past tenses in this narrative:

TABLE 1

		Imperfect Indicative		Preterite		Pluperfect
		Auxil.	Main Vb.	Auxil.	Main Vb.	
1st. Orientation		3	3		2	
2nd. Orientation			3		2	
Pseudo-Action				2	2	
3rd.Orientation		3	3			2
Action:	Orient.		1			
	Action			1	1	

Table 1 shows that we have 16 instances of the imperfect indicative, only one of which occurs within the telling of an action in what can however also be analyzed as a final orientation. The other 15 examples occur in sections which must in Labov's terms be labeled "orientation sections." On the other hand, we have that of the 10 preterites, 6 occur in the telling of actions, and 4 in orientation sections. The imperfect indicative seems to be especialized for the contexts that provide the orientation while the preterites seem to have a more unmarked use, occurring both in the orientation and narration parts. This distribution is predictable from the characterization of these forms provided by the general grammars of Spanish. Thus Bello only says about the preterite that it is "anterior" to the speech act:

> 624. Canté, pretérito, significa la anterioridad del atributo al acto de la palabra.[4]

He does however engage in more subtle qualifications consistent with the data above, when he describes the imperfect:

> 632. En las narraciones el co-pretérito pone a la vista los adjuntos y circunstancias y presenta, por decirlo así, la decoración del drama.

> 633. Análogo es a este uso del co-pretérito el de aplicarse a acciones repetidas o habituales, que se refieren a una época pretérita que se supone conocida.[5]

In a very general way it can be said that in Spanish the imperfect indicative occurs mainly in contexts where background actions are described, in descriptions where several simultaneous or partially overlapping actions are enumerated, etc. It helps the inference that the limits of the action are not relevant either because the action is presented as seen from the past or because what matters is only its partial or total overlap with other actions which can either be expressed with the imperfect indicative or with the preterite. Thus, the imperfect indicative is favored by contexts of habitual actions, on-going actions which provide the background for other events to take place. In these different contexts, the imperfect indicative receives different English translations:

1) with a would form for the habitual actions

> Venía a visitarnos a menudo. Se sentaba en la cocina y nos contaba historias.
> 'He would visit us often. He would sit in the kitchen and tell us stories.'

2) with a was ... -ing form in contexts of actions which serve as background for other actions

> Dormía cuando él entró.
> Imperf. Pret.
> 'I was sleeping when he came in.'

Notice that in these contexts the Spanish imperfect indicative can occur either in the auxiliary estar with the main verb expressed by a gerund in -ndo (directly translatable by an -ing participle in English) or in the main verb itself.

> Dormía ~ estaba durmiendo
> Imperf. Imperf.

Spanish grammars distinguish these two contexts of the imperfect indicative as different forms: only the main verb contexts are considered imperfect indicatives while the Auxiliary + gerund forms are analyzed as "past continuous." However,

since there are two possible forms for this "past continuous" in Spanish, one with the auxiliary inflected as an imperfect indicative, estaban peleando 'they were fighting' and another with the preterite, estuvieron peleando ' they were fighting', the choice between these two forms for the auxiliary must be accounted for along the same lines as for the other contexts where imperfect indicative and preterite contrast.

3) with a past tense for a series of actions which are represented as simultaneous or as partially overlapping; in the narrative under analysis

ponían escaleras, subían pa arriba, le tiraban tierra
'they were placing ladders, going up them, throwing earth on them'

The effect achieved by the use of the imperfect indicative is to list the actions as unordered, as a description of the general activities that were going on. Although the meaning of the lexical items of the verb may lead to infer some temporal order in the actions in the referent, this order is skilfully de-emphasized in this narrative by the choice of the imperfect indicative. The reading of these clauses is that while some of them were putting ladders against the walls, others were throwing earth down and still others were climbing up the ladders which were already up.

If we compare Labov's comments in his analysis of English narratives about the English forms which translate the Spanish imperfect indicative with the distribution of imperfect indicatives in our narrative, we can conclude that the Spanish imperfect indicatives are clearly being used in systematic opposition to the preterites to achieve specific effects of orientation, correlation, evaluation, which are more general components of the structure of narratives.

The forms Labov predicts for the non-narrative clauses are precisely those that translate the Spanish imperfect indicative and we find a match in the structure of narratives between the distribution of the Spanish imperfect indicative and the

distribution of its equivalent forms in English.

As opposed to these uses of the imperfect indicative, the preterite tense only places a situation in the past with respect to the moment of the utterance. It is used to refer to past actions or events as told from the vantage point of the present. This perspective leads to interpret a series of actions in the preterite as sequentially ordered. Thus, two main clauses with preterites become ordered and cannot be reversed without disturbing the temporal order. In other words, two clauses in the preterite are separated by a temporal juncture and would be considered narrative clauses in this analysis. It is easy to see why half of the preterites occur in actions belonging to the section Labov calls the "complicating action." A series of preterites advances the action while the accompanying clauses that provide the evaluation, or the orientation, are placed in perspective by means of the imperfect indicative. As I will point out below, the narrative in this case exploits the marginal ordering effect of the preterites to convey the impression that action is taking place when no events are actually being reported.

Pepe starts his turn with a description containing imperfect tense forms which provide the background for some action which can be expected to be reported. We thus have a first sequence of imperfect indicatives. This sequence by itself could have been interpreted as a description of the habitual activities at El Alamo. But the preterite fuimos 'we went' dated by a los cinco años 'five years after' indicates that the imperfect indicatives provide only the background events against which some set of actions will be developed. The first preterite leads the listener to expect others.

What is especially interesting about this narrative is that a sequence of preterites is used only to give the impression that a series of events is developing, since when we pay attention to the semantics of the lexical items we see that they are not really descriptions of actions:

a) fuimos pa' llá 'we went there' does not refer to the movement involved in going there, but to the state of being there;

b) me encontré este muchacho 'I met this guy' does not refer to the event of the two men meeting and could instead be replaced by 'a friend of mine was there';

c) the following actions are all performatives which continue to advance the narrative only insofar as they contain more preterites which keep the discourse sounding like a narrative:

> comenzamos a hablar ... y luego me comenzó a platicar ... y luego me platicó de un incidente.
>
> 'we started to talk ... and then he started to tell me ... and then he told me of an incident.'

Finally, a present tense (which is often used as an alternate of the preterite to advance the action of the narrative) is used to express the last performative, dice 'he says', and we get a narrative embedded as direct discourse with one orientation clause in the imperfect indicative and two narrative clauses in the preterite.

The preceding description of the different structural inferences favored by the use of one of the simple past tenses as opposed to the other does not allow us to write rules that predict the occurrence of one tense vs. another. As in the case of code-switching (see Poplack in this volume), we cannot predict when the imperfect indicative will be chosen instead of the preterite but we can predict where it is more likely to occur.

The above analysis shows that the meanings of the contexts in which the imperfect indicative is chosen does not contradict the general statement of Spanish grammars as to its distribution and distinction from the preterite. In this last sense we can conclude that the use Pepe makes of the preterite and the imperfect indicative in his narrative is perfectly consistent along general lines with the distribution on which all Spanish grammars agree. However, I can point out some ways in which this distribution does not exactly match that of Spanish spoken in monolingual

areas, away from the contact with English. If we compare the dialect of Spanish represented by Pepe's narrative to other dialects of Spanish, we find a skewing towards a higher frequency of occurrence of the imperfect indicative in an auxiliary than in the main verb itself. While it is true that the forms estar ... -ndo, ir ... -ndo, andar ... -ndo, etc. can be found in most monolingual dialects of Spanish, it is also quite true that their frequency in this text is noticeably higher. Although it can be reasonably argued that this higher frequency is related to the fact of contact with English, which more often favors the split of tense and lexical meaning into and Auxiliary and a Main Verb, I want to distinguish this case of influence of the external factor of contact with English on part of the distribution of a native Spanish form from what would be cases of interference which lead to the use of forms or distributions which are alien to monolingual Spanish and are mere incorporation into the rules of Spanish of parts of the structure of English. As I said, the rise in frequency of forms with auxiliaries vs. forms with only the main verbs can easily be explained as a consequence of language contact by the fact that English verbs use auxiliaries much more frequently than Spanish to express categories of tense and aspect. However, this increase in frequency does not violate any of the Spanish constraints on the use of the imperfect and the interpretation of these constructions with the auxiliary in the imperfect indicative vs. the auxiliary in the preterite can be carried out along the same lines of any other interpretation in other areas of Spanish grammar of the choice between these two forms of the simple past. In the case under analysis we have that United States Spanish is undergoing processes of change like any other dialect of Spanish and that one of the factors influencing these changes is the contact with the English structures. As a matter of fact, it must be seen as no more than an accelerating factor, since the very same processes of change are found in other dialects of Spanish.

A more general hypothesis to be discussed elsewhere is that bilingual Spanish-English speakers make more frequent use of those structures of Spanish which are equivalent to English structures than those which diverge more radically so that they minimize the grammatical structural and lexical differences between Spanish and English. If we keep in mind that these same speakers will have to switch codes in the appropriate social circumstances, and if it proves to be correct that code-switching is constrained to those points where there is structural equivalence (Poplack in this volume), it becomes likely that their use of each code in monolingual situations be affected by some need for consistency with the use of these same codes in code-switching situations. If the occurrence of the very frequent English verb form Auxiliary + Main Verb is increased in a speaker's Spanish production, s/he would have more potential loci for code-switching.[6]

To sum up this preliminary analysis of Pepe's narrative, I can say that it reveals an effective exploitation of the possible distinctions which can be made by choosing between the imperfect indicative and the preterite in Spanish, that insofar as it can be demonstrated, these distinctions fit into the general meanings pointed out for these tenses in the different dialects of Spanish, and they reveal the command which the speaker has of the language.

On the other hand, the analysis of the distribution of these tenses also suggests that United States Spanish is an independent variety in which some changes such as the replacement of simple forms by paraphrastic forms are more advanced than in other dialects of Spanish. The faster rate of change in this area of the grammar must be accounted for by including contact with English as one of the favoring factors. Therefore I conclude both that this story was told making an effective use of the Spanish tense system, and that this use in this narrative has some special characteristics which would justify a separate analysis of the dialect of Spanish spoken by United States bilinguals as an independent dialect of Spanish.

The practical educational relevance of this conclusion is that it may not be adviseable to abstract the norm for United States Spanish speakers from the Spanish used in Spain, or Colombia, or other monolingual Spanish-speaking communities, nor from the Spanish described in the general grammars. Moreover, neither can it be looked for among the Mexican dialects spoken by the parents of these bilinguals, or by their relatives who are still in Mexico. The Mexican norm is as independent from the US norm as any other monolingual norm may be (even though the Mexican dialect may be more similar to the US dialect of Spanish than to any other) because all monolingual norms have been and are undergoing their own processes of change, which, among other differences which could be pointed out, lack the influence of the contact with English as an accelerating factor in those processes of change. Finally, Spanish spoken in a monolingual situation, such as that encountered in Mexico, does not, like US Spanish, need to fulfill the function of providing areas of equivalency of structure where code-switching can take place.

FOOTNOTES

1. Past forms are also used to refer to the non-past but I am not reporting on this part of their distribution here.

2. Look here, Tom, speaking of that Alamo, I'm gonna tell you a stor, [T. ... stories] Okay? That Alamo there they made the the be there by by one side of the river in a small town called Bracketville and then they were were uh went the ones who have those big wagons were around and and and and uhm and then the station wagons and all that, with Columbia and Paramount Pictures at the doors [T. Yes] at the Alamo [T. Yes] and then after getting married five years after we went there I met this guy who was a very good friend of mine and was large and very dark and then he had a great big nose like an Indian ... pure Chicano ... uhm and then we started to talk about this and than and then he began to tell me about the movie of the Alamo and he says "Yeah, you know, I even worked in the movies already" I say "Oh, wow!" [ALL. Laughter] and then he told me about an incident where the Mexican soldiers were going they were going to enter the Alamo and then they were placing the ladders [T. ladders] Yeah! And then they were going up them [T. Up them] and then trenches had been dug for them and then they had placed mattresses and then on top of the mattresses some cardboard and then they were throwing [T. some earth] earth so it would look as though they were staying on the ground. [T. Yeah!] He says "Well, I was standing on top and then they pushed my ladder and I no longer managed to fall on the mattress" [B. On the mattress. ALL. laughter and comments] In the Alamo. [D. He wanted to be a smash [lit. star] and he smashed himself].

3. The <u>que</u> is not subordinating the following clause, see Lavandera 1971.

4. <u>Canté</u> 'I sang', preterite, means the anteriority of the attribute to the time of speaking. Bello 1847: 210.

---

5. In narratives, the co-preterite reveals the adjuncts and circumstances and presents, so to speak, the decoration of the drama.
Analogous to this use of the co-preterite is that of applying it to repeated or habitual actions which refer to a preterite time which is assumed to be known.
Bello 1847: 211.
See also Kany, 1945 chapter V-VIII and Ramsey, 1956.

6. This phenomenon of linguistic convergence was first reported in Gumperz's description of the Kannada-Marathi situation in India (1967, 1971).

REFERENCES

Bello, A. 1847. Gramática de la Lengua Castellana. With notes by Rufino J. Cuervo. Revised by Niceto Alcalá-Zamora y Torres. Buenos Aires: Editorial Sopena. 1958.

Gumperz, John J. 1967. On the Linguistic Markers of Bilingual Communication. In John Macnamara (ed.), Problems of Bilingualism, The Journal of Social Issues 23(2): 48-57.

Gumperz, John J. 1971. Communication in Multilingual Societies. In J.J.Gumperz, Language in Social Groups, Selected and Introduced by Anwar S. Dil, Stanford: Stanford University Press. 230-250. Also in Cognitive Anthropology, ed. by S. Tyler, 435-49. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston. 1969.

Kany, Charles E. 1945. American-Spanish Syntax. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Labov, William. 1972. The Transformation of Experience in Narrative Syntax. In W.Labov, Language in the Inner City. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Lavandera, Beatriz. 1971. La forma que del español y su contribución al mensaje. Revista de Filología Española LIV: 13-36. Also in J.M.Lope Blanch (ed.), Estudios sobre el español hablado en las principales ciudades de América. México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1977. 419-442.

Lavandera, Beatriz. 1978. The variable component in bilingual performance. In J. Alatis (ed.), Proceedings of the Georgetown University Round Table on Languages and Linguistics 1978, to appear in Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press.

Ramsey, Marathon Montrose. Revised by Robert K. Spaulding. 1956. A Textbook of Modern Spanish. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.